

Book Reviews

The Dravida Kazhagam : by Dr. P. D. Devanandan. Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore, 1959. Pp. 30. 75nP.

This is one of the pamphlets which the C.I.S.R.S., Bangalore, has been issuing from time to time, embodying the results of its study of contemporary trends in the life of this country. *Living Hinduism, The Gospel and the Hindu Intellectual, Ramakrishna Movement*, are others of their recent pamphlets.

The Dravida Kazhagam, the subject of this pamphlet under review, is, as its sub-title puts it, basically and mainly a revolt against Brahminism. One wonders if the movement can be considered, in any sense, a permanent feature of the public life in the Madras State. A revolt can only be of purely local and temporary interest and value.

This however does not preclude its being studied as a sign of the times and for what it has been able to accomplish. This booklet after giving a full history of the origins and developments of the movement describes its activities and evaluates it from the political, economical and cultural points of view. The movement has indeed 'created a sense of self-respect and confidence in many lower caste non-Brahman people, especially youth'; and has led its members to defy many of the social conventions by which they had been bound before. It is a spontaneous movement of thought and action among a large section of South Indian Society and has already radically affected their outlook and modes of life. It has become the champion of the cause of the poorer classes of society. It has resisted the economic, linguistic and cultural exploitation of the South by the North.

A movement like this was necessary to rouse the common people and to act as a check to certain tendencies towards widespread social and religious authoritarianism which have been in vogue for centuries in our country and which have been manifesting themselves in more modern forms in recent years.

But even so, a socio-political anti-religious movement is not a legitimate way of changing traditional opinions or opposing undesirable tendencies. Such movements, by their very nature, do not go far and deep enough. The root cause of all social maladies, of political dictatorship, of class domination, of the exploitation of people by people, is, as will be readily admitted, spiritual. Man's inhumanity to man is the poison that has infected human life. It is the spirit of man that is diseased. The remedy

must therefore be spiritual. What we need in India is not a movement which spreads hatred against any class of people or any social system, but a movement which will draw people together in mutual love and respect. Of course people do not readily give up age-old social importance and intellectual eminence. It needs a struggle to upset systems which have become corrupt and traditions which have outlived their usefulness.

A movement which, even though it does not openly proclaim itself to be atheistic, does proclaim that all religion is unnecessary, irrelevant and irrational, and urges people 'to confine themselves to the realities of this life' cannot claim or receive sympathy and support from any one who is convinced that 'behind the ebb and flow of things temporal stand the eternal realities'. Unless the age-long religious quest of the human race is considered to have been totally misguided and unless all revealed religion is to be considered a hoax, it is criminal folly to try to persuade people that they need not concern themselves with anything which is not material. It is not realism, but rank self-deception to think that nothing matters except that we must improve our economic and social status and oust the Brahman from his pedestal, and if possible climb it ourselves. It is as a temporary agitation compelling attention to the matter that the movement may perhaps be justified. But in the present context in this country one feels that the movement is pursuing a wrong method.

The interest of Christians in the movement must mainly lie in the challenge it offers to them. It is seeking to detract people from religion and to put rationalism in its place. Ingersoll is said to be favourite reading for its members! We have come to a poor pass if we have—for whatever purpose—to resort to a long out-moded rationalism in order to divert the attention of people from religion. The movement is dissuading certain classes who were gaining social and economic advantages by becoming Christians from considering the spiritual claims of Christianity. It also puts Christians in South India, who are still prone to observe and keep caste, to shame by its insistence on a casteless society. If the eradication of caste, the uplift of the lower classes economically and socially and above all spiritually, and the presentation of the Gospel of Love to the less privileged classes had been carried out properly by the Christian agencies, both Indian and foreign, which have been at work in this country these last 250 years, there would have been no room for a movement of this kind.

That it has come into being is a challenge to Christianity in this country.

Madras

RAJAJAH D. PAUL

Corpus Christi: by Geddes MacGregor. Macmillan, 1959. Pp. 302. Price 30s.

Those who lay seriously to heart the unhappy divisions of Christendom and who long for the unity of all Christian people,

are aware of the deep-seated problems which stand in the way of Church unity. The Faith and Order movement within the World Council of Churches has focused these problems; and, by the very name it bears, has suggested that they lie largely in the realm of doctrine and Church polity. It is, of course, true that non-theological and non-ecclesiastical factors create no little difficulty; but to those who realize that the King's business demands not only haste but a sense of priorities, have limited their concerns to the problems of theology and ecclesiology.

It may be said with fair conviction that in matter of 'Faith' not many serious barriers remain, apart from the rather formidable cleavage between fundamentalism and non-fundamentalism. They remain, however, in the realm of 'Order'. This has become obvious from the way in which reactions to the Church Union movement in India have been recorded from churches which do not separate polity from doctrine. It has also become clear that these problems arise from the different points of view on the Nature of the Church with which the conceptions of the Ministry within the Church are indissolubly bound up. The most serious controversy has arisen in connection with Episcopal status and function within the Ministry of the Church. Much has been recently said and written on the question whether Episcopacy constitutes the *esse*, *bene esse* or *plene esse* of the Church. But this debate is confined largely to the Anglican Communion in which varying emphases are laid on the meaning and status of the Bishop. Among the 'nonconformist' churches the problem is limited to discussing whether we should or should not do without Bishops. It is with Presbyterianism that the churches, which believe in historic episcopate, have to come to terms not concerning whether or not Bishops are needed, but what it is that constitutes the episcopal function. Whatever the usefulness of Bishops may be in the Church, does the essence of episcopacy consist in a person or in the function performed by the presbytery (presbyters and elders) who safeguard the faith and maintain the continuity of the Church's life and witness?

It is obvious that the New Testament gives no clear answer to this question, and therefore any solution on the basis of Biblical evidence is wellnigh impossible. The solution obviously lies in synthesis rather than anti-thesis, in the principle of comprehension rather than absorption. It is in helping this process that a book like the one under review is so helpful.

The book is written by a scholar of repute and author of several books, among them being *The Aesthetic Experience in Religion*. The essay is a careful and well-documented study of 'the Nature of the Church according to the Reformed Tradition'. The survey covers the Mediaeval period as well as the Reformation and Post-Reformation periods with special emphasis upon the entry and continuance of Presbyterianism in Scotland, the author himself being a member of the Church of Scotland. In making the study the author has tried to state the Lutheran, Anglican

Separatist and Reformed positions in regard to the doctrine of the Church, laying especial emphasis on the related doctrines of the Ministry and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. While inevitably supporting his own point of view, he has been quite fair in stating the positions of other Churches. The book has been written to further the cause of conversations between the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches which have been going on for some time. It is good that it has come out at a time when consequent upon the Lambeth Conference 1958 the conversations have been in the danger of breaking down. It is a book for scholars and will require real determination on the part of a general reader to go through it.

I am afraid this note is more in the nature of emphasizing the importance of the book than detailed comments on its contents.

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JOHN NAGPUR

Sandals at the Mosque: by Kenneth Cragg. (S.C.M. Press).
12s. 6d.

This small but timely book by Dr. Cragg is a sequel to his larger work, *The Call of the Minaret*, in which he set out his Christian understanding of Islam, based on his meditations on the Muslim call to prayer. In *Sandals at the Mosque*, the author gives the same evidence of his sympathetic and appreciative understanding of a typical Friday sermon given in a mosque, where people take off their shoes on entering to worship and to hear the word of God. Confessedly, Dr. Cragg, with a deep spiritual insight, sees more in the sermon than perhaps many, whether Christian or Muslim, would normally see. But he is a theologian-artist, and as such it is his endeavour to make people see the true beauty which is missed by ordinary eyes. His plea is that if (metaphorically speaking) we take off our shoes at the mosque and enter in to get a feel of the true fervour of true Muslim worship and the sincerity of the devotional exhortation, we would learn many spiritual lessons for our edification and for our evangelistic task. 'That the shoes of the Christian student mingle with those of the Muslim worshipper is no more than a sign of our human alongsidedness.' Dr. Cragg shows that 'only in our appreciation and our realization of this 'alongsidedness' can Christians understand the mind of Muslims for a relevant and effective preaching of the Gospel to them.

He points out that there are temptations to be guarded against in our thus entering the wilderness of Islam, lest technological stones be substituted for the bread of life. Christ cannot be compromised, but He condescends. He is the 'Word made flesh'. Therefore the incarnational approach to Islam is of the utmost importance, if the Gospel is to be effectively preached and not dogmatically asserted. He shows how much there is in such

Muslim doctrines as 'shirk', which is illuminative to the understanding of our own religion and relevant to the needs of the world today. Similarly the Muslim emphasis on God's sovereignty is something which must be captured from and for Islam for the good of all, and for the salvation of the world in peace.

These two books of Dr. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret* and *Sandals at the Mosque*, are prophetically relevant to the Church's life and to its evangelistic task today. They deserve a very careful and unprejudiced reading by all Christians. A very useful word-list of Islamic terms is appended for the benefit of the general reader.

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Aligarh

EMMANUEL SADIQ

The Christian Family: by Leslie and Winifred Brown. (World Christian Books No. 29). Lutterworth Press, London. 1959. Pp. 80. Rs.2/03.

This is a little book of homely wisdom and practical advice about the meaning and place, problems and opportunities of the family in the Church. Written together by a husband and wife, with a background of Christian service in many lands and societies, it is a suitable manual to put into the hands of all those in the Church who feel that the family today is not all that it ought to be and can be.

There is a discussion of the history of the word 'family' in English at the beginning of the book, but very soon we get into the real origin of the institution in creation and the need of trust, forgiveness and understanding for the realization of the true ends of family existence. The book tries to clear up some of the common misconceptions about sex and touches on the ethical problem of pleasure, but always brings the reader to the central point that the source of meaning and value in human life is in God and all facts and relationships have to be understood and explained in relation to Him.

The varied and difficult problems that face a Christian family in the difficult and unstable conditions of the modern world are squarely faced and constructive suggestions about making the Christian character of the home more real are provided. As the authors reveal familiarity with, and draw illustrations from various areas and ecclesiastical groups, the book is a genuinely ecumenical work on the Christian family.

This book is one of the signs of an increasing recognition of the need of greater understanding of the meaning of personal relations; and it is to be hoped that it will help the average member of the Church to share in that concern, and to participate intelligently in meeting the challenges that the Christian faces in this area of life.

Serampore College

M. P. JOHN

A Good Minister of Jesus Christ : by J. Gordon Jones: (Baptist Mission Press, 41a Lower Circular Road, Calcutta 16). Pp. 55. Rs.1/75.

This booklet contains a series of addresses delivered by the Revd. Dr. Gordon Jones to the students of theology in Serampore College. He was invited as a special lecturer in pastoralia. His purpose in the lectures was to paint a portrait of the great Apostle as a minister of Jesus Christ. He has well succeeded in this attempt, and in drawing lessons from the picture thus developed for a minister of the Lord.

Generally St. Paul has been known as an evangelist : and it is interesting to know that he was a model minister, shepherding and feeding his flocks as well. All the different aspects of a minister's work are to be found here : preaching, witnessing, counselling, interceding. And all the qualities of a Christian teacher, as theologian, exegete, polemicist. The Apostle of the Gentiles had these in ample measure. The secret of his astounding personality as a model Christian minister is discovered in the last chapter : his life in Christ.

This booklet should be read and studied by all those ministers of the Lord who want to be true to their calling and whose 'one increasing purpose' is to serve the Master. For though the Apostle lived twenty centuries ago, his ministry is relevant today. Just as the Christ he served is the same yesterday, today and for ever.

Serampore College

D. A. CHRISTADOSS

Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the United Theological College, Bangalore.

This Jubilee Souvenir published on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the United Theological College, Bangalore, is an attractive brochure, informative and interesting to read. The first two articles deal with theological training in the whole Church and contain notes on the history of Protestant theological training : they give a clear picture of the ways in which such training has been looked upon in the Church. The articles entitled 'The Earliest Years: A Slice of College History' and 'The First Fifty Years of the College' give a vivid description of the history of the College from small beginnings. Other articles deal with the Christian Ministry, the Unity of the Church, Y.M.C.A. Training and the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society. All these remind us how very fortunate the Bangalore Theological College is to be linked up with every aspect of the work of the Church in India today so very closely.

Principal Chandran is to be congratulated on getting such distinguished Bishops and Professors of Theology to contribute to this souvenir. They include Bishop Neill, Bishop Hollis, Bishop